

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT ISLAMABAD 4774 ACTION SECSTATE MAY 10.

QUOTE S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 4774

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, US

SUBJECT: PROPOSALS FOR HIGH LEVEL US-PAK MEETING

1. CHARGE WAS CALLED TO MFA BY DR. HYDER,DIRECTOR GENERAL, AMERICAS, AFTERNOON OF MAY 10. DR. HYDER NOTED THAT IN CHARGE'S LAST MEETING WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY, AGHA SHAHI HAD SAID THAT IF SECRETARY VANCE COULD NOT VISIT PAKISTAN, GOP WOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER SENDING FOREIGN MINISTER TO WASHINGTON FOR TALKS ON THE ALLEGATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE AGAINST US.

2. DR. HYDER SAID THAT UPON REFLECTION, GOP HAD DECIDED TO PUT ASIDE POSSIBILITY OF AZIZ AHMED VISITING WASHINGTON
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AND TO SUGGEST THAT SECRETARY VANCE VISIT PAKISTAN AT A CONVENIENT TIME. DR. HYDER SAID THAT SECRETARY'S VISIT HERE WOULD PERMIT TALKS AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL, I.E., WITH BHUTTO, AND A THOROUGH REVIEW OF US-PAK RELATIONS. IF ANY FOLLOW-UP WERE REQUIRED, AZIZ AHMED WOULD THEN GO TO WASHINGTON. AMBASSADOR YAQUB HAS RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS TO INFORM THE DEPARTMENT ALONG THESE LINES.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT GOP'S RENEWED EMPHASIS ON VIST FROM THE SECRETARY REFLECTS BHUTTO'S DESIRE TO IMPROVE HIS OWN DOMESTIC POSITION. A VISIT BY THE SECRETARY WOULD BE UNIVERSALLY SEEN IN PAKISTAN AS A TACIT ADMISSION BY THE UNITES STATES THAT THE CHARGES AGAINST US ARE TRUE AND THAT THE SECRETARY HAS COME TO APOLOGIZE. BHUTTO MAY NOT PUBLICLY STATE THIS CONTENTION, AND IF HIS POLITICAL SITUATION DOES NOT WORSEN, WE BELIEVE HE PROBABLY WOULD NOT. A VANCE VISIT AT THIS TIME, HOWEVER, WOULD BE WIDELY PERCEIVED HERE AS PROOF THE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST US WERE TRUE.

4. A SECRETARIAL VISIT WOULD ALSO HELP BHUTTO DOMESTICALLY IN THAT IT WOULD DIVERT PUBLIC ATTENTION FROM HIS CONTINUING CONFRONTATION WITH THE OPPOSITION AND SHOW THE NATION HE CAN STILL COMMAND AN IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE (WITH THE IMPLICATION THAT HIS OPPONENTS COULD NOT). IF OUR PURPOSE IS TO FIND A WAY TO RETURN US-PAKISTANI RELATIONS TO AN EVEN KEEL, A VISIT BY THE SECRETARY WOULD POSSIBLY BE USEFUL IN ACHIEVING THAT END, BUT IT WOULD BE AT TOO HIGH A PRICE FOR US TO PAY-THE APPEARANCE OF THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE JOURNEYING TO CANOSSA TO APOLOGIZE FOR OUR ACTIONS. ALSO, IF THE SECRETARY DID VISIT, AND THE TALKS WERE AMICABLE, THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER AT A FUTURE DATE, IF HE THOUGHT IT POLITICALLY USEFULY TO DO SO WOULD NOT REFER TO THE SECRETARY'S VISIT AS PROOF THE AMERICANS ADMITTED WRONGDOING. THAT IS THE KIND OF AMMUNITION BHUTTO LIKES TO HAVE IN RESERVE
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AND WHICH COULD MAKE THINGS UNCOMFORTABLE FOR US SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE. OFFERING A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE SECRETARY, IN TERMS OF ANOTHER HIGH LEVEL VISITOR FROM THE DEPARTMENT, WOULD, FOR THE SAME REASONS, NOT BE IN OUR INTERESTS.

5. WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD RESPOND, HOWEVER, TO YAQUB'S PRESENTATION. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT IN PRINCIPLE IT WOULD BE VERY USEFUL TO HAVE THE KIND OF PRIVATE AND QUIET MEETING THAT BOTH BHUTTO AND THE SECRETARY HAVE SUGGESTED. WE CONSEQUENTLY RECOMMEND THAT WHEN YAQUB MAKES HIS PRESENTATION TO THE DEPARTMENT, WE RESPOND THAT AS WE HAD SAID EARLIER, THE SECRETARY'S SCHEDULE IS SUCH THAT HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO VISIT PAKISTAN. HOWEVER, WE AGREE THAT TALKS WOULD BE USEFUL AND WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO RECEIVE THE FOREIGN MINISTER IN WASHINGTON AT A MUTUALLY CONVENIENT TIME. WE COULD ADD THAT WE KNOW THE GOP WAS CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF AN AZIZ AHMED VISIT TO THE STATES, AND WE THINK THE IDEA IS A GOOD ONE. TO OFFER THE GOP A FALL-BACK POSITION, WE COULD SUGGEST THATIF

THE SECRETARY'S AND THE MINISTER'S SCHEDULE WERE FLEXIBLE ENOUGH, THAT
THE SECRETARY AND THE MINISTER GET TOGETHER JUST BEFORE
OR AFTER THE CIEC MEETING.

6. IT WOULD ALSO BE USEFUL TO OFFER SPECIFIC PROPOSED
DATES FOR A MEETING TO THE GOP. WE NOTE THAT AZIZ AHMED
WILL BE IN TRIPOLI FOR THE ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS
CONFERENCE FROM MAY 16-23. HE IS PLANNING ON ATTENDING
THE CIEC MEETING FROM MAY 30 TO JUNE FIRST. DEPENDING ON
THE SECRETARY'S SCHEDULE, PERHAPS IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE
TO INVITE HIM TO WASHINGTON FOR AN UNOFFICIAL VISIT
BETWEEN THE TWO MEETINGS. UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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